

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 12 and 14 - 20 remain in the application. Claim 13 has been canceled. Applicants respectfully request allowance of each of the pending claims. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss this application with the Examiner on August 25, 2004.

The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1 - 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,587,108 to Guerlain et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Guerlain").

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's position for the following reasons.

The Examiner bears the initial burden to establish a prim facie case of obviousness. As it is understood, the reference must teach each and all elements of the claimed invention. When evaluating a claim for determining obviousness, all limitations of the claim must be evaluated. If the Examiner does not produce a prima facie case, Applicants are under no obligation to submit evidence of non-obviousness.

The amended independent claim 1 is directed to a data processing and display method for use in interactive manufacturing process management. According to this method, a first variable value is subtracted from a first target value to obtain a first variable variance, and a second variable value is subtracted from a second target value to obtain a second variable variance. A first variable variance bar and a second variable variance bar are displayed on a graphical display device. Nevertheless, the first target value and the second target value are not graphically shown on the graphical display device.

Guerlain fails to show that the first target value and the second target value are not graphically shown on the graphical display device, as the claimed invention so describes. Guerlain teaches a graphical user display for providing real-time process information to a user for a continuous multivariable process (abstract). The graphical user display provides a graphical user interface 50 (FIG. 3), which includes a process variable gauge interface 256 (FIGs. 7A - 7G). The process variable gauge interface 256 includes one or more bars 284 extending along a gauge axis 285 (col. 18, lines 46 - 47, and FIG. 7A). Each bar is representative of a set of high and low process limit values for a particular process variable (col. 18, lines 47 - 49). Guerlain wants to keep the process variable within constraints, i.e., the high and low process limit values (col. 2, lines 22 - 27).

The claimed invention is distinguishable from Guerlain. First of all, the first and second target values do not serve as process limits, but merely as a benchmark for producing the first and second variable variances. The claimed invention focuses on examining the difference or variance of an actual variable value with respect to a target variable value, while Guerlain only cares about whether the process variable falls within the high and low process limit values, without caring about how far away this process variable is from the limit values.

Furthermore, Guerlain teaches away from the claimed invention by strongly suggesting that the high and low process limit values must be shown on the graphical user display, so that a range of limits can be graphically presented to an operator. For example, Guerlain states "an operator monitoring the controller should be presented

with information regarding... the limits to which process variables are constrained”

(col. 2, lines 62 – 67). Therefore, Guerlain fails to teach or even suggest that the process limit values can be eliminated from being displayed because the displaying of which is exactly the invention disclosed by Guerlain. Unlike Guerlain, the first or second target variable value of the claimed invention is not graphically shown on the graphical display device as claimed in the amended claims 1, 8, and 12 since there is no need to do so for the operator to see them in the present invention as long as the variances are graphically represented on the display.

For the same reasons discussed above, the amended independent claims 8 and 12 are patentably distinguishable from Guerlain. Accordingly, the remaining claims depending upon their corresponding independent claims are, therefore, patentable as well.


CONCLUSION

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this application in an allowable form. In view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are drawn to a novel subject matter, patentably distinguishable over the prior art of record. The Examiner is therefore, respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections.

Should the Examiner deem that any further clarification is desirable, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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